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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Eric Johnson re-elected Senate President Pro Tem**



**ATLANTA** – Senate President Pro Tempore Eric Johnson (R-Savannah) was re-elected to his third consecutive term as Senate President Pro Tempore this morning shortly after the members of the Senate were sworn in on the first day of the 2007 Session of the Georgia General Assembly.

“I love this Senate, this chamber and its tradition,” Sen. Johnson told his colleagues in a speech shortly after his election. “With a unified cooperative Senate, we truly have become the Upper Chamber because we have conducted ourselves with integrity and we have legislated well.”

Sen. Johnson was first elected Senate President Pro Tem in 2003 – commonly known as the Senator’s Senator – shortly after Republicans took control of the Senate following the 2002 election cycle. He is the 66<sup>th</sup> Senate President Pro Tem in the history of Georgia and only the third to serve more than two terms.

Reflecting back on his years as president pro tem, Sen. Johnson said, “In 2003, we were witness to one of the great miracles of the American political system – the peaceful transfer of power. After 130

years there was a new majority party in charge of the Governor's office and the Senate. Add to that a divided government with the House controlled by the opposition party and a recession.

"We were going to have to work together to assure that Georgians were taken care of and the critical issues dealt with."

With a Senate president a member of the minority party, the rules of the Senate were rewritten, and Sen. Johnson became the defacto president of the Senate – deciding through a committee on assignments committee appointments, staff hires, etc. This year, following the election of Republican Casey Cagle as Lt. governor, many of the powers of the Senate will be restored to the new Senate president.

"When I decided to run [for office] again last year, I was determined that I could help transfer the powers back to the Lt. governor and return the Senate to its traditionally designed governance structure and provide a bridge between the legislative branch that sits in this chamber and the executive branch that presides over it.

"I remain dedicated to those goals and appreciate the opportunity to serve this state and the Senate in some small way."

Sen. Johnson has served in the Senate since 1995, and previously served as Senate Minority Leader.

"The names on the desks change every two years. The titles you bear change. The person with the gavel changes. But our founding fathers blessed us with a system that assures continuity of service. So – our brief experiment with a temporary transfer of powers has come to an end.

"With God's blessings and the good will of his colleagues, Casey Cagle will continue the strong tradition of Senate leadership using a firm hand, a kind heart and a clear vision.

"Because it is here – under this gold dome – that we go to work for Georgia. And it is here that we are tasked with preparing a better future for the next generation."

Sen. Johnson will serve as Senate President Pro Tem for the next two years.

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*Sen. Eric Johnson is the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate. He represents Senate District One, which includes Bryan County and a portion of Chatham and Liberty counties. He may be reached by e-mail at [eric.johnson@senate.ga.gov](mailto:eric.johnson@senate.ga.gov) or at 404.656.5109.*